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Bard

IN THE ANTHROPOLOGY MUSEUM

In the phase called Fading Away
the lover's tentacles are resorbed
into the heart, the clamor
of his newspaper mouth
silences. He sleeps late.
He doesn't wonder what all
those princesses are busy at—
he may be a shepherd
but they are not his sheep.
For a day or a week or with
any luck a few weeks more
he stays at the center of himself,
undistracted from the simple
argument of being alive.

Let us leave him there
with calm eyes fixed
on nothing in particular.

20 March 2012

= = = = =

It's not enough to know
what I'm doing
I must also be sorry for doing it.

20.III.12

= = = = =

A man is abandoned
on a field full of stubble
miles away, just miles away.

Nothing works, no car
no horse, the ground itself
too far for his legs to reach

and a dog is barking
tentative in the middle distance.
No one can find him now.

Sometimes you just are where you are.

20 March 2012

= = = = =

Now a man apart from morning
owns his own time, his shadow
he controls and sends out here and there
to touch or influence or be rebuffed
(a shadow has no feelings)—

I am here

he says, unreachable by you or even
by river or by fire, only my shadow
do you get to know, it loves and hurts you
better than I can. Rejoice in my shape
sent among you as a living darkness.

That's how they talk, men who know
how to let slip their shades and send
them out to hunt and harry in a dozing world.

20 March 2012

= = = = =

Wading in

bare skin

a shower

the water

makes us natural

again

afraid.

20.III.12

= = = = =

Asking for or trying to do it
as a tree of olibanum in the desert or
this strange guiac your new smell
determines the direction of
the new subway all these years
under construction west to east
for once where the heart once was
with all the thread veins
stuck out of it surrounding me
call this a clock and me the hands
on it pointing desperately enough
to what will never ever be now.

20 March 2012

ET RESURREXIT TERTIA DIE

And only if they listen
does the world come home
slamming the door gently
and the dog barks joy.

Here

I am, come to you after all
because you never asked me
but waited silent at my grave
I wake up like a daffodil,
a crocodile from torpor.
a cymbal player in the orchestra
you need me only at the climax.
I am the climax. Bitter seeds
from where I was I have
been chewing in my mouth
some kiss me to share the taste,
I am nothing but everything.
You need me the way a pine
tree needs the color green.

20 March 2012, Kingston

TO STILL THE LONG NEEDING

Eve told the snake Eat the fruit yourself
and Satan did. And so the world began.
If Eve had done it all alone
we'd still be Eden and the Old Man gone.

20 March 2012, Kingston

PROBLEM WITH WINDOWS

I wish I could find a window
that isn't a mirror.

I like to sit at the window
first thing in the morning—

my father did that for thirty
years after he retired
his clear pale far-away eyes
on all the busy nothingness outside.

And here I am again
and everything I see out there
is just a part of me, *aversion*
desire, indifference, every
car that passes is coming from
and through and to my soul
or what to call it, that vague
ipseity that never leaves me alone.
Why can't I see what's really there?

21 March 2012

= = = = =

Moving things to make them mine
learning to shift gears
code calendars. Once
I was a beggar by this throne
I slump on now, once
yesterday was tomorrow
and I understood. A kingdom
is the other side, the place
of good counsel, the smile
on every object's face
when men are frowning. Here,
the metals in my body
sing to me, water too
is a mineral, the single stone
that lets us live. Each
hour brings me closer to now.

21 March 2012

= = = = =

Well being want of
The strummed guitar
Trivializes the spoken

Saitenspiel ... aus fernen
Nobody can say more
When tonal talks

There are so many things
To be clear about and none.

21 March 2012

= = = = =

Nearly there on the side of you that faces Greece
But what water is it that divides

The dove comes down

Trace minerals but mostly copper
Mostly iron mostly truth

The flutter of whose wings cools her brow
Even while it menaces the part below

The womb inside the skull

2.

In three days it is come
The answer
That falls from heaven
In the shape of a question

Molly will you, will you Molly?

And already it feels like Easter come and come again
And be at home in the bone and the bird still there

The shadow of a living thing never goes away.

3.

So this is the hovering hour
When the great silken curtain
Purple with pomegranates worked in gold
Shimmers in the spring wind
And why not,

She is there, she is often
There, she is always there
And there is here

And the shadow of the bird
Flits along the silken sheen

Soon it will be now.

(21 March 2012)

= = = = =

Elementary mistakes. The monster
is an artist and sings himself to sleep.
Ice floe. Into the isolate condition.
North. If Sibelius had made an opera
this would have been it. This needs
a yearning, self-pitying almost, tenderness
to go out on. To endure the world
and give something back. Even if just music.

21 March 2012

= = = = =

But who is the woman who was someone else?

We take such liberties with liberty. One
peso in the meter and we think we own space
or one whole hour in a dimwit town—

but the woman watched us from the eagle door
flew molasses swift her brunel eyes to organize
space into harness, steelwork of the self.
She patched us together till we were her mother.

Everybody wants that. The heartmilk fever.
King David on his lustful penthouse railing,
Merlin sinking through the leaf mulch down
into her once-green kingdom, the shadow of space.

21 March 2012

= = = = =

for Linda Dayan

1.

I'll give you all the Egypt I can—
a stone has many sides
but only one inside
and that's what knows
the story the outside carvings try to tell—
look at the stone until you see
the story that's inside you too.

2.

We too are transitioning.
Tadpole to frog, human to something else.

3.

Geese stand in the drowned barley field.
The queen sits up straight, her thighs
are Upper and Lower Egypt, her eyes
are the eyes of an animal taking notice.
They are interested eyes. They own everything.

4.

Every poem is written in Egypt,
gets carried through the Red Sea,
gets understood in Palestine.
And keeps the children up at night
trying to use what they understand.

21 March 2012

KING DAVIDS

It's strange that you were King David. Because I used to be King David too. I guess we must have stood, elbow to elbow, leaning on the railing on top of our palace, looking around. Some palace—mudbrick, adobe, a little of that scarce wood from Lebanon, some pretty stone facings on the street side.

There we stood, checking out the neighbors. We were King David, you were much younger than I but did that matter? That's the kind of thing you never know. Till it's too late. Or too early. Maybe we have to be other people, later, looking back, to know whether difference matters. Ages, genders, deities, color of eyes. What's on my mind though is the woman. Did you see her first or did I? We used to quarrel about it. these two identical kings so different from each other. One of us saw her, anyhow, and both of us fell in love with her, the way you can really, really fall in love only with somebody far away, more image than person, more idea than image. All shimmer and no smell, you know how it is. You looked at her and thought, her cool idle skin. Cool and smooth from doing nothing. Smooth as the newborn. Smooth from nothing happening. I looked at her and thought the same. Cool. We wanted her cool vacancy. It is so hot and busy being king, even our dreams are full of battles and taxes and bureaucracy.

For all kinds of reasons we had no business falling in love with her. She was the daughter of Sheba, or Daughter Number Seven, Bathsheba we knew her name was, married to a featherbrain jock in our army. Get rid of him, we thought, then we can have her. We should have left it there, a vain thought to match the vain amour. We should have left it there but we didn't. We sinned, contrived the husband's death, the wife's genteel corruption in our bed. Beds. How many are we now? We sinned. Since then, it's still lust and guilt, and looking out the window

and gazing at the neighbors. Now we call it art—we take a picture of their shadows, we write songs for them to sing but never give them the words, never teach them the tune. We watch from the roof, we're no better than pigeons. We amuse ourselves like children spitting over the railing, or tossing potato chips out in the air so they helicopter-float their way down to the street. Sometimes we must have looked at each other and asked each other what we were doing up there. Wasn't there a war to wage, or some god to dance and sing in front of, to amuse the priests and shock the old women? I still don't know why we were kings or what kings or even people are supposed to do. Mostly I remember the feel of your elbow against mine.

21-22 March 2012